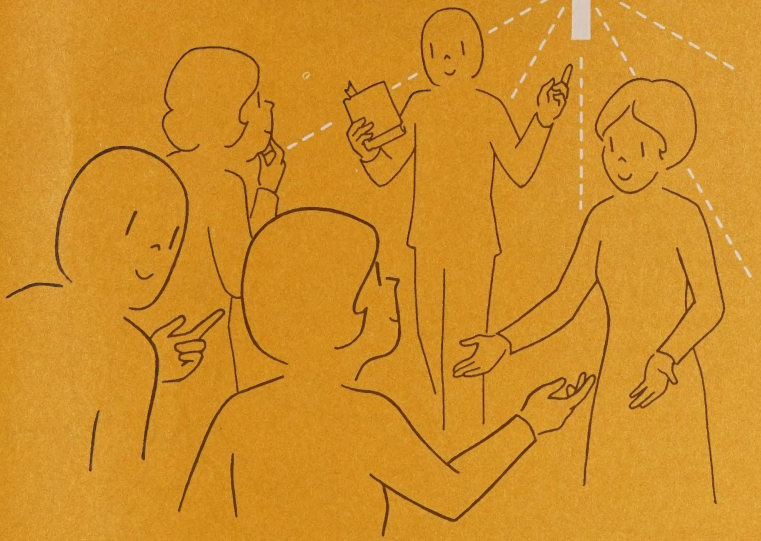
What you should know about

SHARING YOUR FAITH



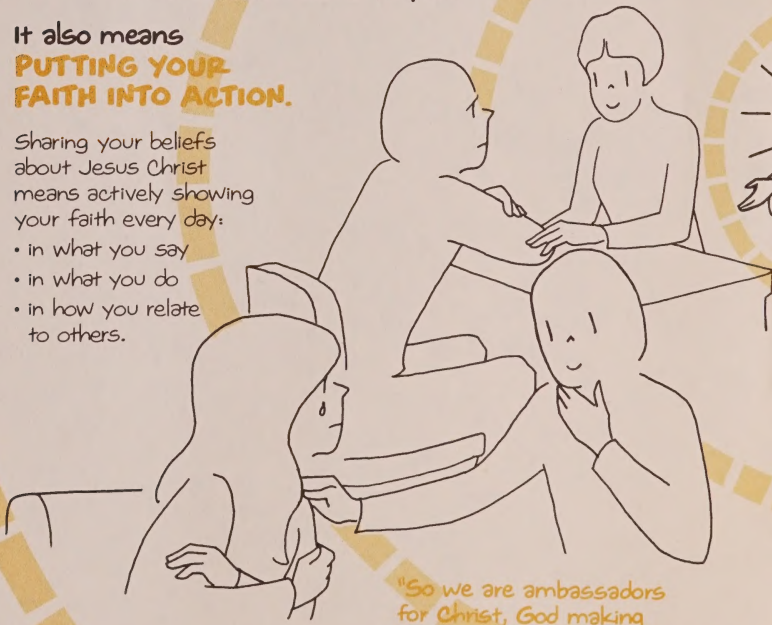
What do you mean, "SHARING YOUR FAITH"?

Sharing your faith means **WITNESSING** -- telling others what Jesus means to you.

It also means **PUTTING YOUR FAITH INTO ACTION.**

Sharing your beliefs about Jesus Christ means actively showing your faith every day:

- in what you say
- in what you do
- in how you relate to others.



"So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us."
2 Corinthians 5:20

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WHY is it IMPORTANT to share your faith?

Because it's part of
LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE!

JESUS SPOKE ABOUT WITNESSING, using plain and simple words:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses."

Acts 1:8

YOU OWE IT TO OTHERS to share the peace and joy that Christ brings to your life and wants to bring to theirs. Many people are unaware of the gifts that can be theirs by accepting Christ as their Savior.

Learn more...

WHAT exactly should I SHARE ?

THE GOSPEL --
the living person of Jesus Christ as revealed to all of us through:

CHRIST'S WORDS

They show God's mercy and love in spite of our sinful self-centeredness.

CHRIST'S ACTIONS

Christ performed miracles that showed compassion and changed people's lives.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus suffered and died on the cross to offer forgiveness to those of us who repent for our past sins.

THE RESURRECTION

Jesus rose from the dead, inspiring hope for eternal life and offering his presence in our lives.

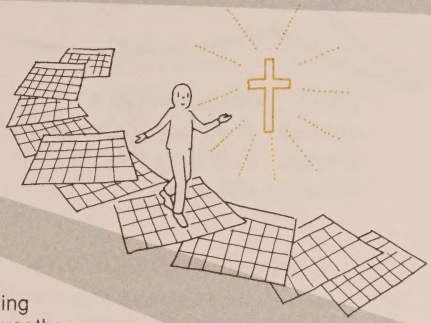
YOUR OWN PERSONAL TESTIMONY,
simply telling what you believe, is the best way to explain the Gospel to others. You don't have to "preach" or memorize passages from the Bible.

JESUS CHRIST IS IMPORTANT IN THE WORLD TODAY

Now more than ever, people need the Gospel to help them deal with everyday concerns of 20th-century life:

EMPTINESS

The Gospel can give meaning to lives that seem to be without purpose.



LONELINESS

The Gospel is a comforting presence that helps us weather those dark moments when we feel so alone.

FEAR

A fountain of faith, the Gospel can help us face crises, doubts and anxieties with strength, calmness and conviction.

O.K., it's important to share your faith, but

IS IT REALLY MY RESPONSIBILITY ?

YES! Witnessing is a mission that every Christian shares. Fulfilling this mission requires:

COMMITMENT

This means allowing God into your life and dedicating yourself to following Christ's example of humility, selflessness and sacrifice.

INVOLVEMENT

No Christian's faith is complete unless he or she actively continues the work that Christ started so many years ago: sharing the news of salvation and eternal life.

"And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"

Romans 10:14

SHARING YOUR FAITH EFFECTIVELY

It takes more than effort alone to be effective at sharing your faith. It takes:

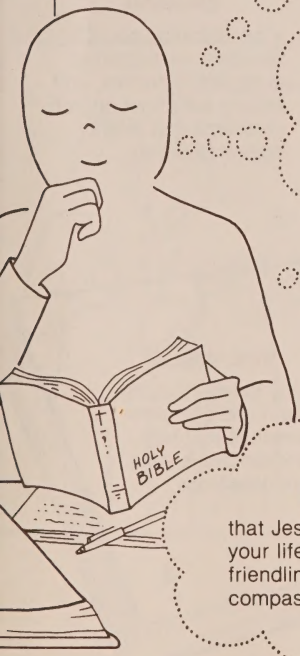
FIRM BELIEF
in the Gospel and in the importance of God's work on earth.

SINCERITY
because you can't expect others to take you seriously if you don't take your Christian mission seriously.

KNOWLEDGE
and understanding of Jesus, the person we want others to meet and know.

A METHOD
or plan for witnessing. Confidence depends on knowing what you're doing and how to do it.

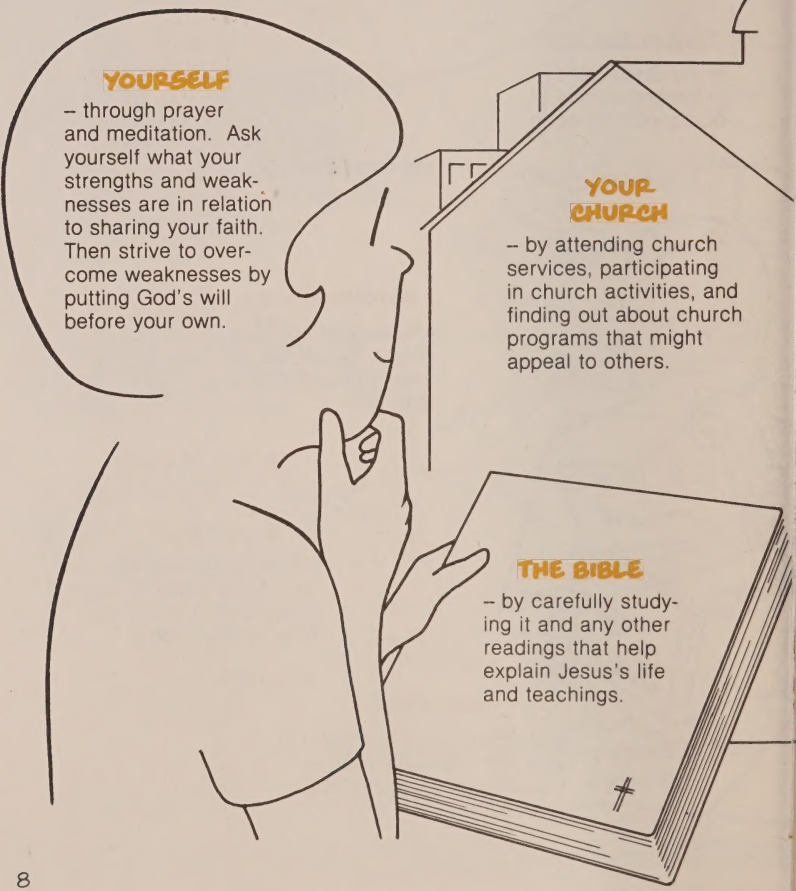
EVIDENCE
that Jesus Christ is present in your life -- qualities such as friendliness, openness and compassion.



HOW TO PREPARE TO

Before you attempt to share your new acquaintance, it's important to

Take the time to
GET ACQUAINTED with:



YOURSELF

-- through prayer and meditation. Ask yourself what your strengths and weaknesses are in relation to sharing your faith. Then strive to overcome weaknesses by putting God's will before your own.

YOUR CHURCH

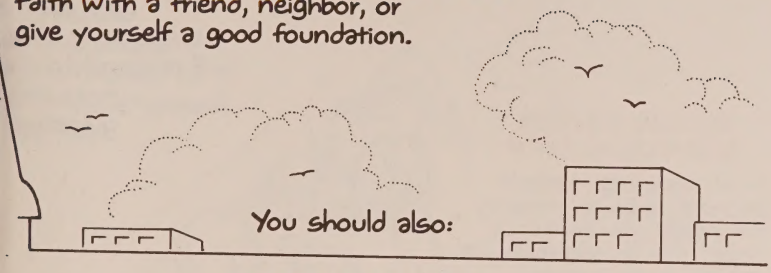
-- by attending church services, participating in church activities, and finding out about church programs that might appeal to others.

THE BIBLE

-- by carefully studying it and any other readings that help explain Jesus's life and teachings.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

faith with a friend, neighbor, or give yourself a good foundation.



READ ALL YOU CAN

on the subject of witnessing. Your local church or library may be a source of such reading materials.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS

(and faith) with fellow church members. It's a great way to build confidence and explore your faith more fully.

ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS

that others might ask about the Gospel or your faith. Try to think of appropriate answers in advance.

HOW TO SHARE

Just as no
are exactly alike,
will respond to the
witnessing.
guidelines

BECOME A LIVING EXAMPLE OF FAITH

Avoid "preaching" – people are more readily convinced by actions and attitudes than by words. New acquaintances will respond to your openness, friendliness and good will, as signs that your faith is showing through.

ESTABLISH HONEST RELATIONSHIPS

Really listen, and get to know others by taking advantage of "common ground" – activities and interests you can enjoy together. People will resent insincere interest.

BE POSITIVE

Follow Christ's example, by showing compassion, understanding and forgiveness when faced with the faults of others. A helping hand, a pat on the back and a listening ear are preferable to a put-down.

YOUR FAITH

two people
no two people
same method of
BUT, these general
may help.

OFFER FELLOWSHIP

Invite a friend or acquaintance to share something special with you -- a church activity, Sunday service or a social gathering of fellow church members. It's a great way to show that you care!

SHARE YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION

If your friend or acquaintance decides to attend a church-related function, make it a point to accompany him or her. This will give you a chance to help calm feelings of nervousness and answer questions.

FOLLOW UP ON INVOLVEMENT

Be sure to ask for reactions (both positive and negative) to exposure to the Gospel and the church. This gives you a chance to answer questions, eliminate confusion and learn from your own experience.

WHERE AND WHEN should I share my faith ?

It's something that can be done ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME! For example:

AT HOME

Sharing your faith is a part of every family activity, whether you're discussing the Bible, attending a church service or simply sharing God's love and understanding with each other.

AT WORK

In the factory, in the office, or outdoors – you can share your love for Christ in the way you handle your job and relate to co-workers.

AT SCHOOL

Friends and fellow classmates have a chance to share Christ's message through relationships that develop during shared classes and activities.

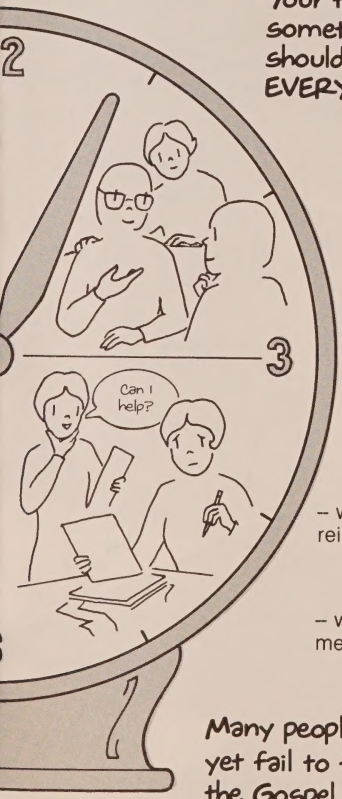
IN THE COMMUNITY

You can witness while visiting friends and neighbors, shopping or whenever you socialize at a special event, by referring to God in your conversation. You can also show your love for God by helping the needy and working for world peace.

By truly living your faith, you can become an advocate for Christ 24 hours a day, 365 days a year!

WITH WHOM should I share my faith ?

Your faith is something you should share with EVERYONE, including:



FAMILY MEMBERS

– who are naturally influenced by your attitude toward God and church.

FRIENDS

– who out of respect and love for you may come to share your joy and appreciation for the Gospel.

NEIGHBORS

– with whom you have a great opportunity to share your faith and hospitality.

OTHER CHRISTIANS

– who benefit from a chance to explore and reinforce their love for the Gospel.

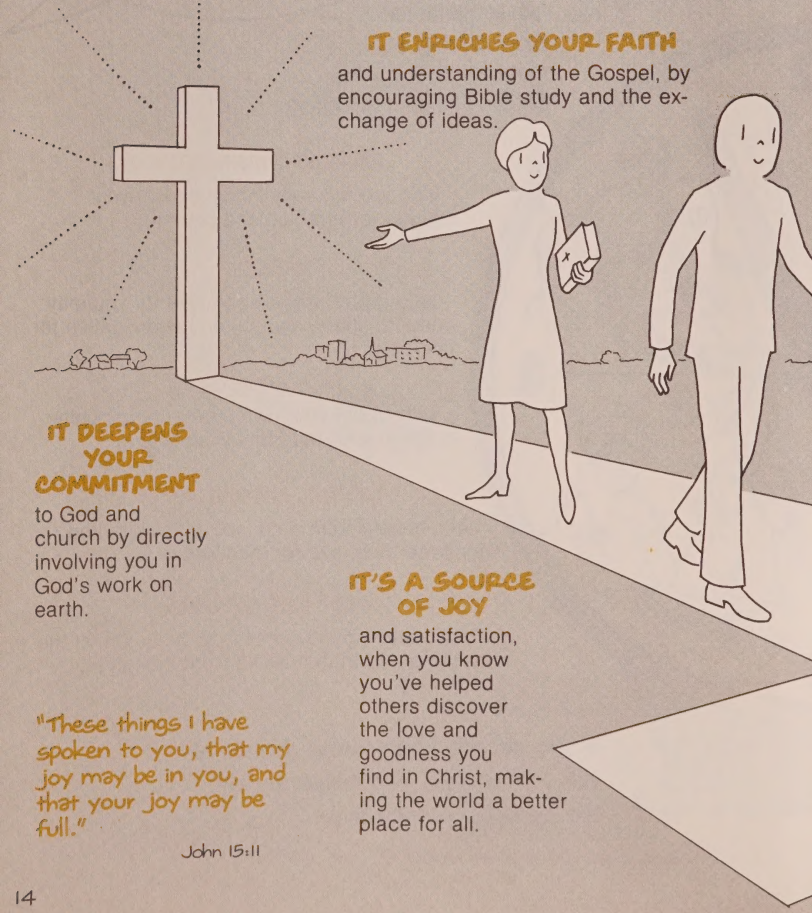
NON-CHRISTIANS

– who may find in your faith in Jesus Christ the meaning and truth missing from their lives.

Many people know who Jesus is -- yet fail to feel the presence of the Gospel in their lives.

THE SPECIAL REWARDS OF SHARING YOUR FAITH

Witnessing can add meaning to your own life as a Christian.



IT ENRICHES YOUR FAITH

and understanding of the Gospel, by encouraging Bible study and the exchange of ideas.

IT DEEPENS YOUR COMMITMENT

to God and church by directly involving you in God's work on earth.

IT'S A SOURCE OF JOY

and satisfaction, when you know you've helped others discover the love and goodness you find in Christ, making the world a better place for all.

"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

John 15:11

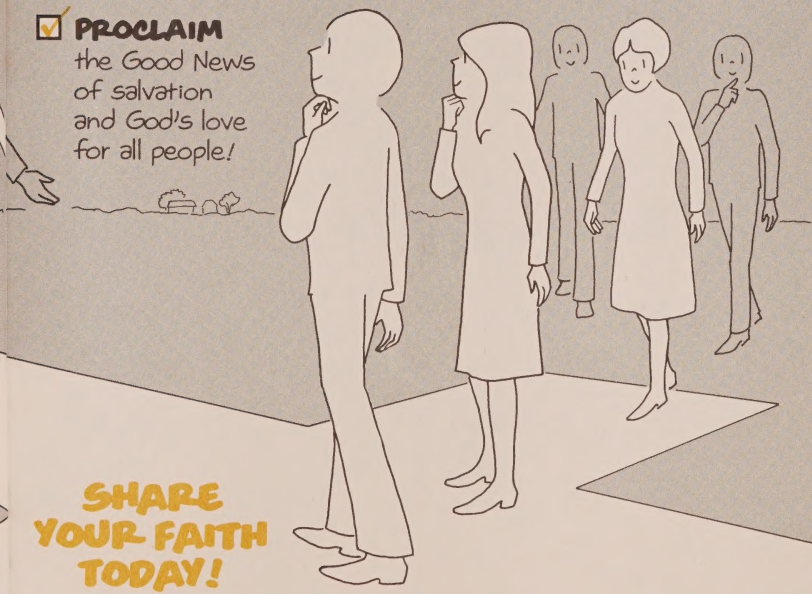
Soo--

IT'S NO SECRET...

your faith is something you shouldn't keep to yourself.

In sharing your faith you serve God. And, at the same time you:

- ☑ **REAFFIRM** your own beliefs.
- ☑ **PROCLAIM** the Good News of salvation and God's love for all people!
- ☑ **SHARE** the love and joy of the Gospel with others.



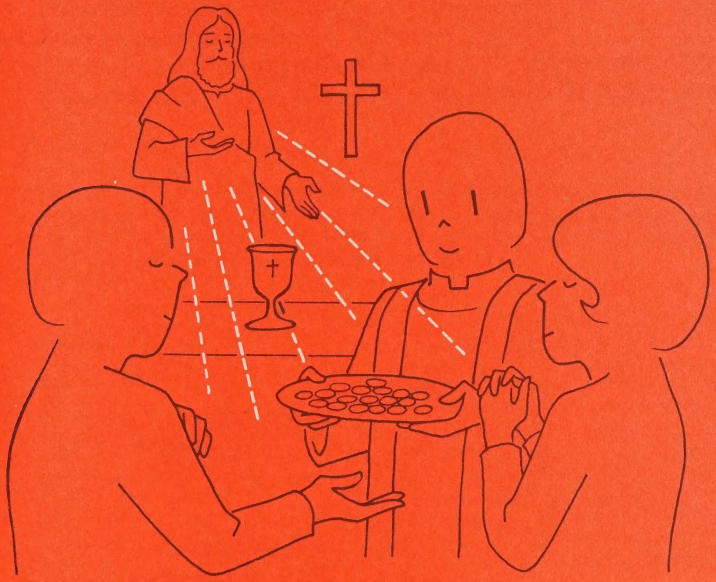
SHARE YOUR FAITH TODAY!

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only..."
James 1:22

LITHO IN U.S.A.

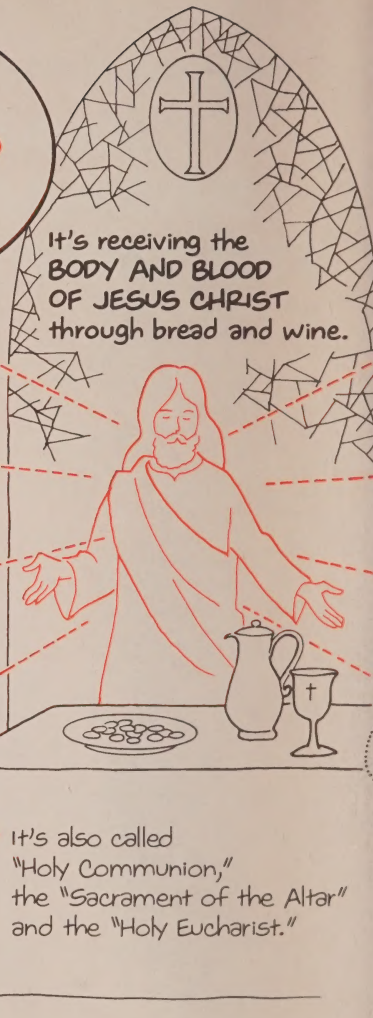
What every LUTHERAN should know

ABOUT THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER



What is the Sacrament of THE LORD'S SUPPER* ?

It's receiving the BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST through bread and wine.



This sacrament, instituted by Christ, is:

A REMINDER

of the last meal shared by Jesus and the disciples before Christ died.

A MEMORIAL

of Christ's death on the cross so that we might have eternal life.

A PHYSICAL MEANS

of experiencing God's grace and love through which the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation come to us.

* It's also called "Holy Communion," the "Sacrament of the Altar" and the "Holy Eucharist."

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WHY should I KNOW ABOUT this sacrament ?

Because the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper can enrich our lives. Knowing about this sacrament can:

STRENGTHEN OUR PARTICIPATION

in the life and work of the church. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a gift from God, given not only for our personal benefit, but also for the benefit of others. The sacrament is a source of strength that enables us better to serve God and others.

RENEW OUR SENSE OF SECURITY

in a rapidly changing and uncertain world. The sacraments, which form the roots of our faith, provide us with a tangible means of understanding God's gift to us. Participation in the sacraments helps us to live more confidently.

MAKE US MORE AWARE

that we need the spiritual nourishment that this sacrament provides. Baptism makes us children of God. Receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper helps us to nourish and strengthen that relationship.

ORIGINS OF THE

Celebration of the Lord's Supper
rooted in the Jewish Passover

THE OLD TESTAMENT

tells of the first Passover meal, shared on the night before Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and the bonds of slavery.

GOD INSTRUCTED THE ISRAELITES

through Moses:

- TO MARK THEIR DOOR FRAMES with the blood of a slaughtered lamb. The angel of death would then pass over these homes while claiming the lives of all first-born Egyptian children.

- TO GATHER TO EAT their last meal in Egypt. They shared roasted lamb (symbolizing sacrifice), unleavened bread (representing the haste of flight) and bitter herbs (recalling the suffering of slavery).

God commanded that the Passover be celebrated each year on the anniversary of the exodus from Egypt.

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever."

Exodus 12:14

SACRAMENT

is historically
meal.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

describes another Passover meal.
On the night before the crucifixion,
Jesus gathered with the twelve disciples
to celebrate the Passover.

CHRIST INSTITUTED

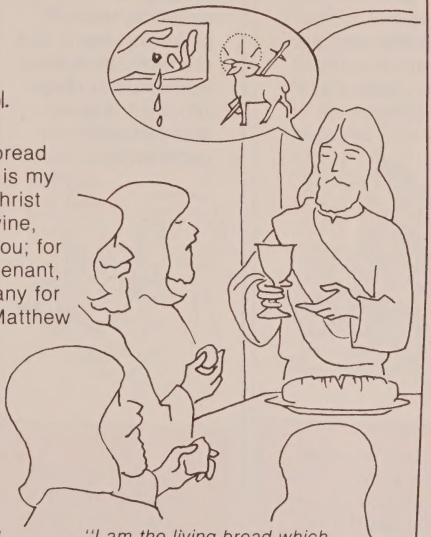
the Sacrament of the
Lord's Supper at this meal.

Christ blessed and broke bread and said: "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). Christ also gave them a cup of wine, saying "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28).

CHRIST CHOSE

to become the Passover
(Paschal) lamb.

Christ's blood marked the wooden cross on which he was crucified. Once more, the angel of death passed over. This time, eternal life was made possible as Christ had promised earlier.



"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

John 6:51

What is the SIGNIFICANCE of this sacrament ?

The Lord's Supper is
by Lutherans.
- The Sacrament of
- The Sacrament of

When we partake of

FOLLOW CHRIST'S COMMAND

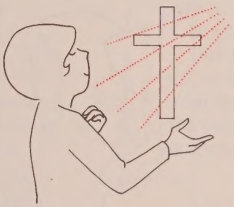
As recorded in the New Testament, we are to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

"Do this in remembrance of me... For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

1 Corinthians 11:24-26

RECEIVE GOD'S GIFTS

Through Christ's sacrifice, the forgiveness of sins and the promise of everlasting life in union with God is given to the church community.

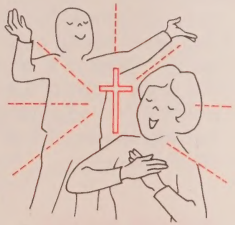


"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

CELEBRATE OUR JOY

On this solemn occasion, the continuing presence of Christ in our lives and God's concern for people on earth give us much cause for rejoicing.

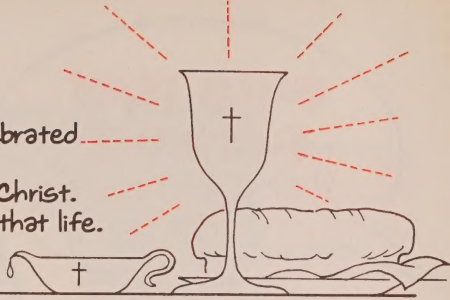


"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy."

John 16:20

one of two sacraments celebrated

Baptism initiates our life in Christ.
the Lord's Supper sustains that life.
this sacrament, we:



STRENGTHEN OUR FELLOWSHIP

Communion is an act of sharing. Through the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we can share with others the gifts Christ so willingly gave us.

"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

1 Corinthians 10:17

OFFER GOD PRAISE AND THANKS

"Eucharist" is a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving." During the Lord's Supper, we praise God in our words and songs.

"Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Colossians 4:16-17

REMAIN CLOSE TO GOD

While Baptism is the beginning of our life in Christ, the Lord's Supper enables our relationship with God to continually nourish and strengthen us.

"He is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being.'"

Acts 17:27-28

WHO MAY RECEIVE Holy Communion ?

THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH
Trust in God is the most important requirement for receiving the Lord's Supper.

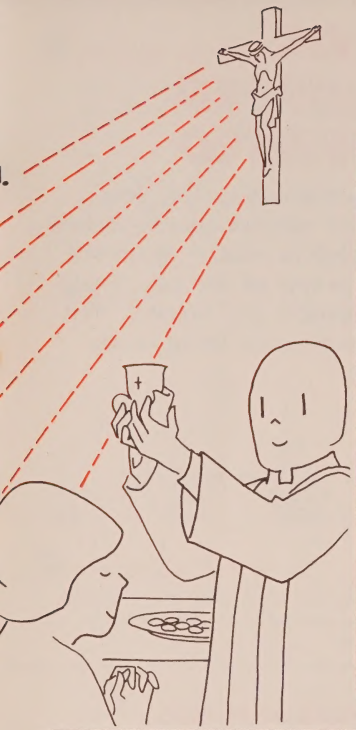
Faith comes through:

BELIEF

that Christ died to make payment for our sins. Martin Luther tells us in his "Small Catechism" that our belief that Christ's body and blood were given and shed for us makes us worthy to receive Holy Communion.

BAPTISM,

which marks our birth into a spiritual life. The Sacrament of Baptism is the first time we receive the gifts of life, salvation and the forgiveness of sins. Since this sacrament is given only once, it is important that we continue to be strengthened in our relationship with God by joining in the Eucharistic meal.



COMMUNICANTS
may include:

- ALL CONFIRMED MEMBERS of the Lutheran church who meet the guidelines for admission to communion.
- BAPTIZED CHILDREN who understand the meaning of the sacrament (normally around age 10). Parents, religious education teachers and the pastor share the responsibility of instructing and preparing each child.
- OTHER BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the Crucified Lord is present in this sacrament, giving himself to his people. (Some Lutheran churches have other standards for admission to communion.)

CONFESSION OF SINS
normally precedes receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Confession may be:

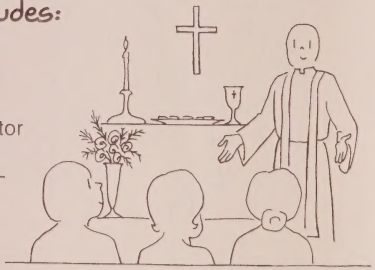
- PUBLIC -- the congregation acknowledges its sinfulness. The pastor grants forgiveness (absolution) after the prayer of confession has been offered during the liturgy.

- PRIVATE -- a more personal way of receiving God's grace.

Fasting may also make the sacrament more meaningful.

HOW THE LORD'S SUPPER IS CELEBRATED

The chief weekly liturgy of Lutherans is the Holy Communion. The communion service usually takes place during the regular worship service -- after the confession and absolution, prayer of the day, Scripture and Gospel readings, sermon and creeds. The order and content of the communion liturgy may vary, but it usually includes:



1 THE PREFACE

After bread and wine are brought to the table, the pastor and the people exchange prayer greetings in conversational style.

2 PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

All present lift up their hearts in joy and give thanks for God's blessings, just as Christ gave thanks before he shared the wine and the bread with the 12 disciples (Luke 22:17). The preface to the prayer ends with the words of praise chanted by the crowd on the first Palm Sunday in Jerusalem (Mark 11:9-10).

3 WORDS OF INSTITUTION

As Christ shared the Last Supper with the disciples, so, too, the pastor prepares the holy meal, recalling the history of redemption in the Eucharist prayer. Taking bread and wine into his hands, the pastor speaks or chants the words used by Christ when the sacrament was instituted. The body and blood of Christ are present in, with and under the bread and wine.

4 THE LORD'S PRAYER

This short and simple prayer, complete in its expression of all our earthly and spiritual needs, was first taught to the Apostles by Jesus.

5 DISTRIBUTION

Before distributing the sacrament, the pastor may repeat the Risen Christ's greeting to the Apostles: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). Then the pastor distributes the Lord's Supper at the altar,* reminding all that the bread is the body of Christ, broken for us; the wine is the blood of Christ, shed for us. Hymns or other choral music may be sung while Communion is being given.

6 FINAL PRAYERS

A hymn of thanksgiving and praise may be sung, followed by prayer, a short period of silence, a final blessing and the dismissal.

* In some instances, Communion may be received at home, in the hospital, etc.

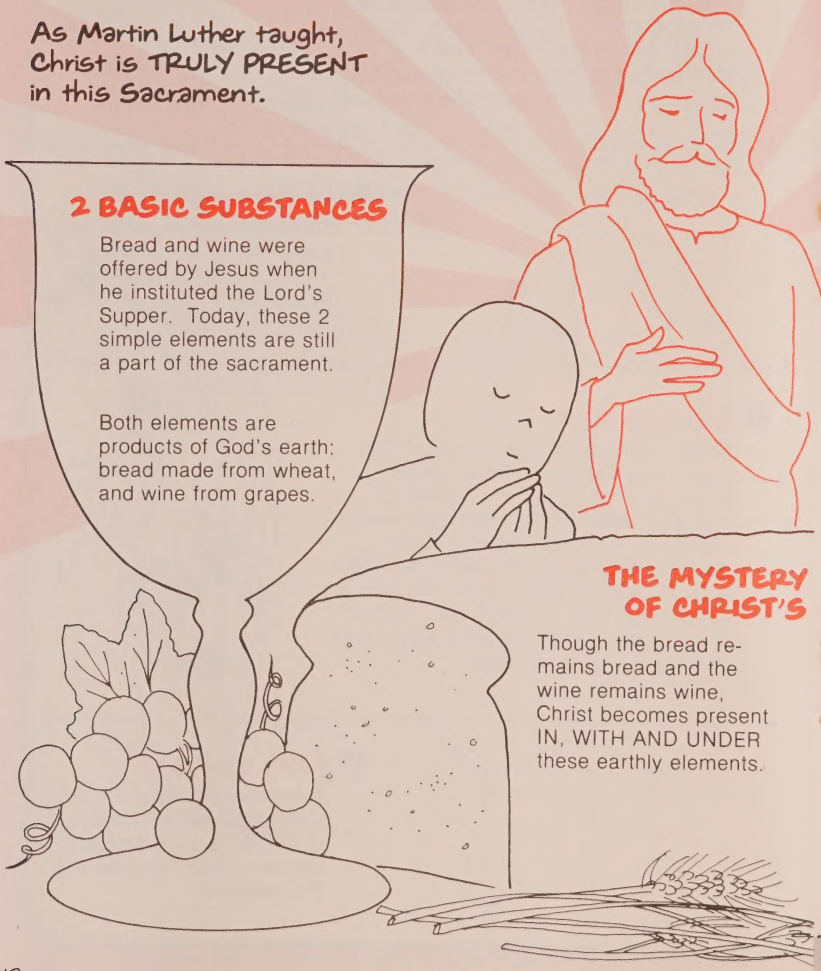
COMMON ELEMENTS TAKE ON SPECIAL MEANINGS IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As Martin Luther taught, Christ is TRULY PRESENT in this Sacrament.

2 BASIC SUBSTANCES

Bread and wine were offered by Jesus when he instituted the Lord's Supper. Today, these 2 simple elements are still a part of the sacrament.

Both elements are products of God's earth: bread made from wheat, and wine from grapes.

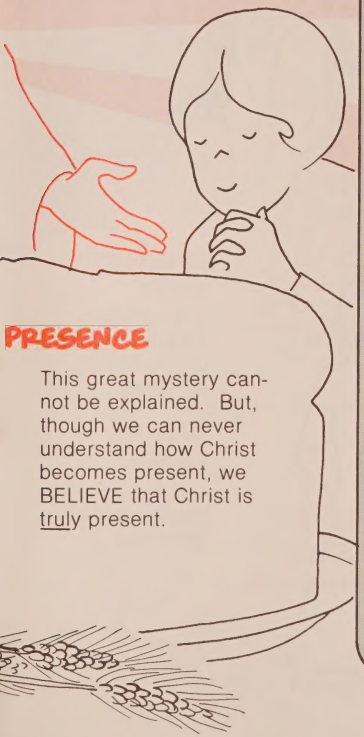


THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S

Though the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, Christ becomes present IN, WITH AND UNDER these earthly elements.

"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.' "

Luke 22:19-20



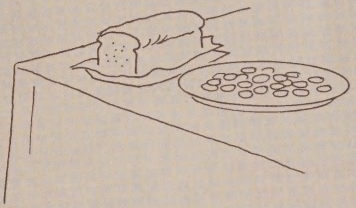
PRESENCE

This great mystery cannot be explained. But, though we can never understand how Christ becomes present, we BELIEVE that Christ is truly present.

WAYS OF SHARING
the sacramental elements may vary.

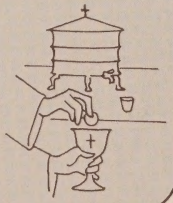
BREAD

- Following the Passover tradition, Christ and the disciples ate unleavened bread. Today, unleavened wafers are most commonly used.
- Wafers or small pieces of bread may be placed on the tongue or in the hand of the communicant. When a whole loaf is used, a piece is broken off for each communicant.



WINE

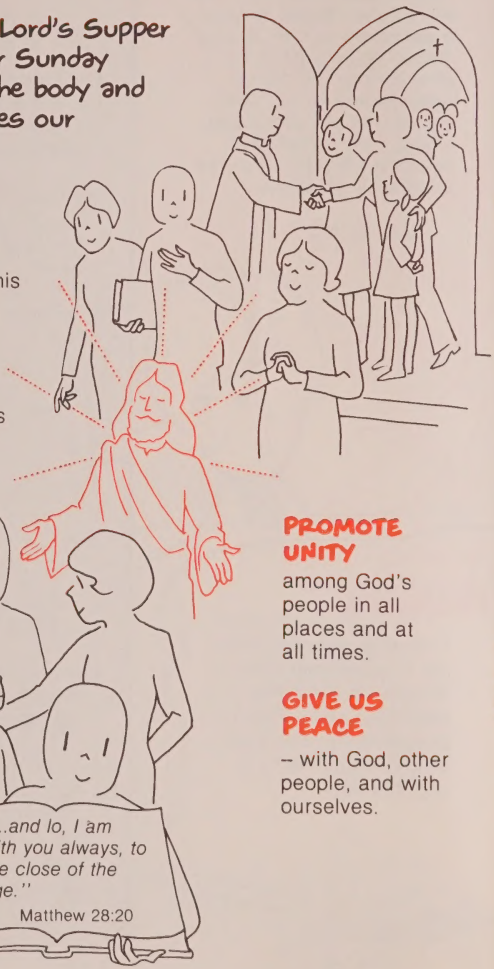
- Special sacramental wine (or any ordinary wine) may be used.
- Communicants may drink from a large chalice or individual cups may be distributed.
- Intinction is also an option. The pastor dips the wafer into the wine and places it on the communicant's tongue.



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

AFFECTS OUR DAILY LIVES

The importance of the Lord's Supper extends far beyond our Sunday celebrations. Sharing the body and blood of Christ nourishes our spirits and helps to:



ENCOURAGE US

to live faithfully, following the example set by Jesus during his life on earth.

GIVE US HOPE

that one day we will share in eternal life because of Christ's selfless sacrifice.

STRENGTHEN OUR BELIEF

that Christ is ever-present and that we are invited to partake of Jesus' presence in the sacramental elements of bread and wine.

PROMOTE UNITY

among God's people in all places and at all times.

GIVE US PEACE

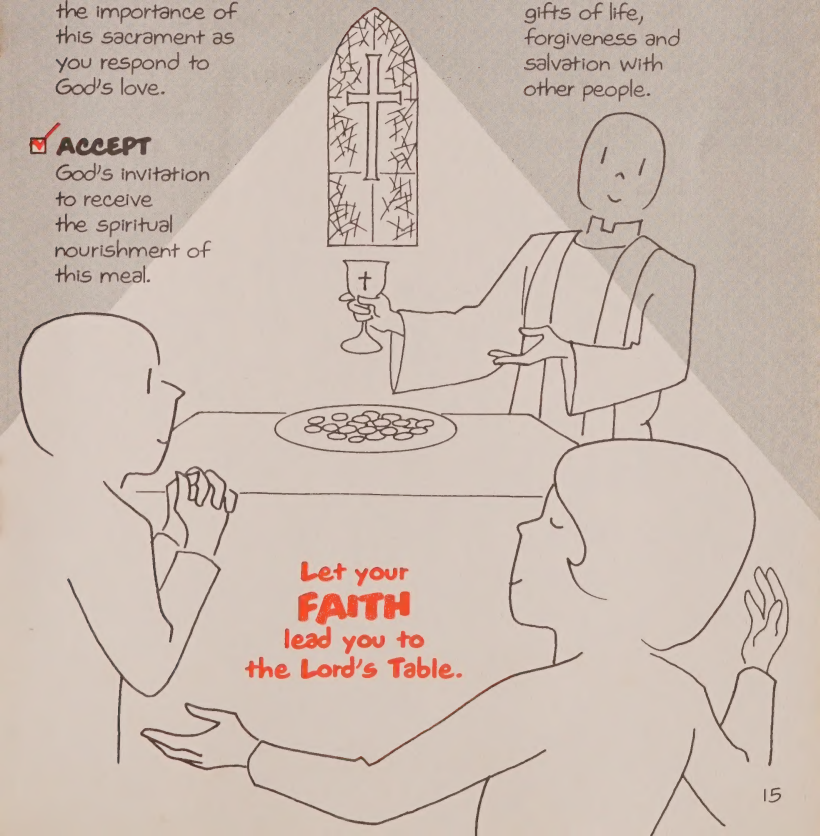
– with God, other people, and with ourselves.

Soo--

JOIN IN THE JOYFUL CELEBRATION

of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

- **UNDERSTAND** the importance of this sacrament as you respond to God's love.
- **ACCEPT** God's invitation to receive the spiritual nourishment of this meal.
- **SHARE** God's gifts of life, forgiveness and salvation with other people.



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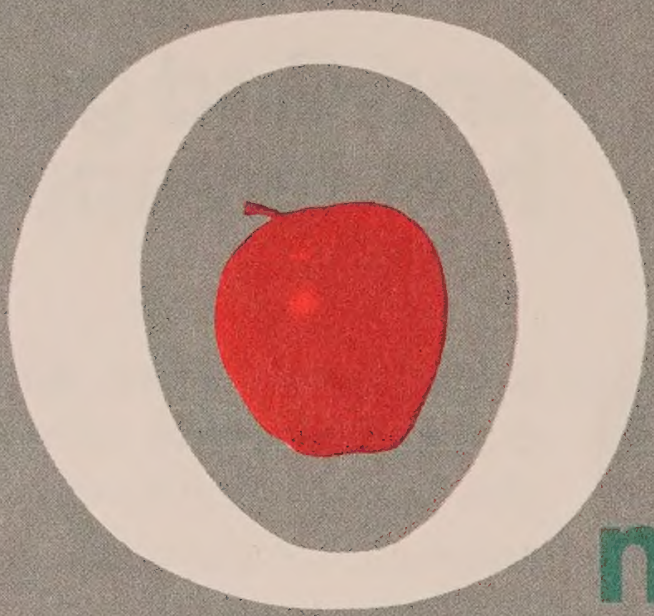


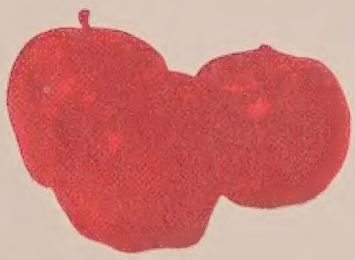
nce
upon
a n
~~time~~
apple

there was
a man
who had
nothing...

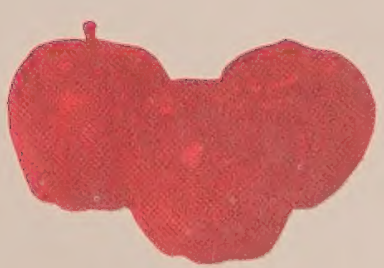
and God gave him ten apples

He gave him the first apple so that he might have something to give back to God to show his gratitude for the other nine.

He gave him three apples to eat.



He gave him three more apples to trade for a shelter from the sun and rain.



He gave him three other apples to trade for clothing.

The man ate three apples.

He traded three for a shelter from the sun and rain.

He traded three for clothing.

Then he looked at the first apple he had received . . .

He knew God had given him the first apple so that he might return it to Him out of gratitude for the other nine as well. But, the apple looked bigger and juicier than the rest. And he reasoned God had all the other apples in the world . . .

so
the
man
ate
the
first
apple
also...
and gave back to God...

the core.

God has given us enough apples to supply our needs—enough to show our gratitude to God for

. . . His creative power;
. . . His love in Christ;
. . . His Spirit at work now.

Will we return to God our best—or only the core?

Produced by the Division for Parish Services, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129, in cooperation with the Lutheran Laymen's Movement for Stewardship.
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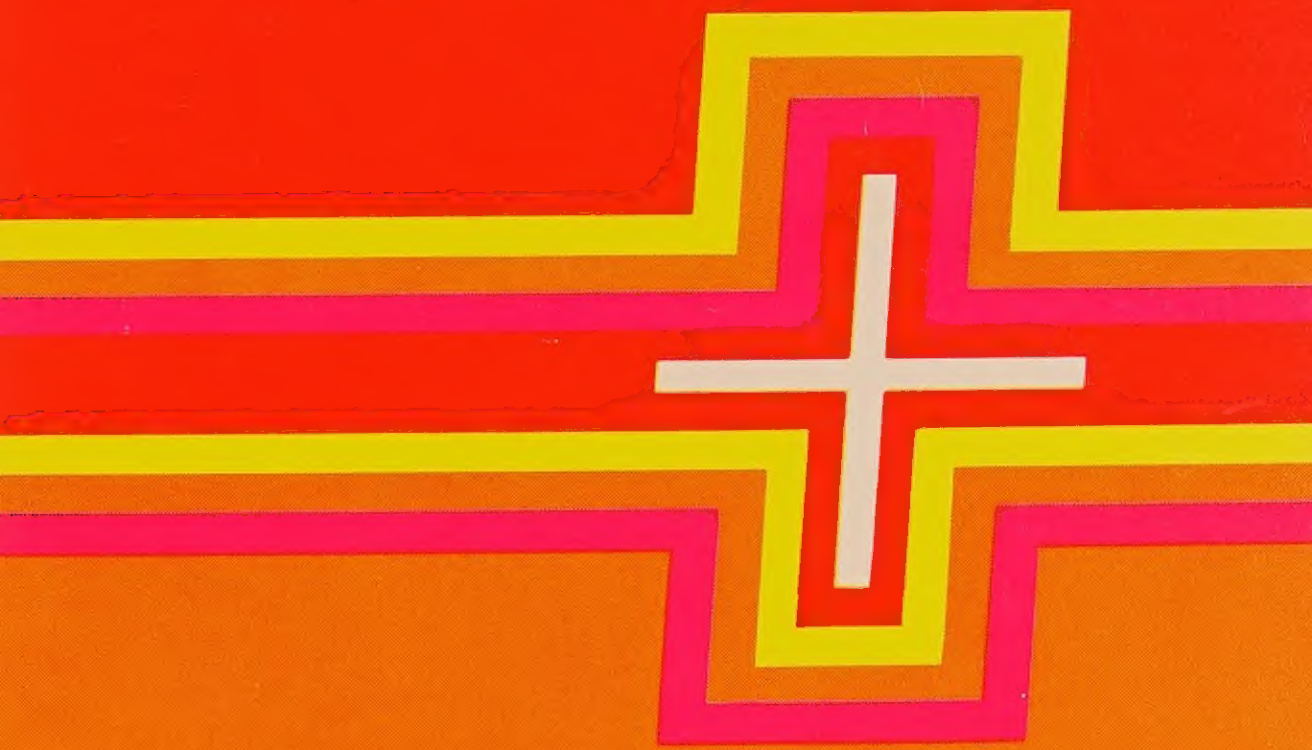
Printed in U.S.A.

The Small Catechism



By MARTIN LUTHER

In Contemporary English
with
Lutheran Book of Worship Texts

The Small Catechism

By MARTIN LUTHER

In Contemporary English
with
Lutheran Book of Worship Texts

A Handbook of Basic Christian
Instruction for the Family
and the Congregation

Augsburg Publishing House / Minneapolis
and
Fortress Press / Philadelphia

1979

This translation is based on the 1531 edition of Luther's Small Catechism. It makes available to Lutheran families and congregations a uniform text in contemporary English. As a teaching version it is intended to help Lutheran Christians express an enduring faith. It was prepared in 1960, and slightly revised in 1968, for the Boards of Parish Education of the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

This 1979 edition adds (indicated by the symbol at the left) the texts used in Lutheran Book of Worship for the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer (both adapted from texts prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts) and for the Words of Institution (Holy Communion). It is prepared under the auspices of the Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation of the American Lutheran Church, the Division of Congregational Life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, and the Division for Parish Services of the Lutheran Church in America.

The Small Catechism by Martin Luther
in Contemporary English
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Augsburg Publishing House
Board of Publication of the Lutheran Church in America
Concordia Publishing House

799J83 Printed in U.S.A. 2–834

PART ONE

The Ten Commandments

I am the Lord your God.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear, love, and trust God
above anything else.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not take the name of
the Lord your God in vain.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not use his name
superstitiously, or use it
to curse, swear, lie, or deceive,
but call on him in prayer, praise, and
thanksgiving.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not neglect his Word
and the preaching of it,
but regard it as holy
and gladly hear and learn it.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not despise or anger our
parents and others in authority,
but respect, obey, love, and serve them.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not kill.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not hurt our neighbor in any way,
but help him in all his physical needs.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that in matters of sex our words and conduct are pure and honorable,
and husband and wife love and respect each other.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not steal.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not take our neighbor's
money or property,
or get them in any dishonest way,
but help him to improve and protect
his property and means of making a living.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not betray, slander,
or lie about our neighbor,
but defend him, speak well of him,
and explain his actions in the kindest way.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not desire to get our
neighbor's possessions by scheming,
or by pretending to have a right to them,
but always help him keep what is his.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maid-servant, or his cattle, or anything that is your neighbor's.

What does this mean for us?

We are to fear and love God
so that we do not tempt or coax away
from our neighbor his wife or his
workers,
but encourage them to remain loyal.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY OF ALL THESE COMMANDMENTS?

He says:
"I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers
upon the children to the third
and fourth generation of those
who hate me,
but showing steadfast love to
thousands of those who love me
and keep my commandments."

What does this mean for us?

God warns that he will punish all
who break these commandments.
Therefore we are to fear his wrath
and not disobey him.
But he promises grace and every
blessing to all who keep these
commandments.
Therefore we are to love and trust him,
and gladly do what he commands.

PART TWO

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father
almighty, Maker of heaven
and earth.

And in Jesus Christ
his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from
the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of
God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy Christian church, the
communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord.
He was conceived by the power
of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
(Or, He descended to the dead.)
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE FIRST ARTICLE

I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has created me and all that exists.
He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers.

He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day.
God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil.

All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it.
Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

THE SECOND ARTICLE

And in Jesus Christ
his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from
the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of
God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord.
He was conceived by the power
of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
(Or, He descended to the dead.)
On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living
and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ—
true God, Son of the Father from
eternity,
and true man, born of the Virgin Mary—
is my Lord.

At great cost
he has saved and redeemed me,
a lost and condemned person.
He has freed me
from sin, death, and the power of the devil—
not with silver or gold,
but with his holy and precious blood
and his innocent suffering and death.

All this he has done that I may be his own,
live under him in his kingdom,
and serve him in everlasting righteousness,
innocence, and blessedness,
just as he is risen from the dead and
lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

THE THIRD ARTICLE

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy Christian church, the
communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own
understanding or effort
believe in Jesus Christ my Lord,
or come to him.
But the Holy Spirit has called me
through the Gospel,
enlightened me with his gifts,
and sanctified and kept me in true faith.

In the same way he calls, gathers,
enlightens, and sanctifies

the whole Christian church on earth,
and keeps it united with Jesus Christ
in the one true faith.

In this Christian church day after day
he fully forgives my sins
and the sins of all believers.
On the last day he will raise me and all
the dead
and give me and all believers in Christ
eternal life.

This is most certainly true.

PART THREE

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

THE INTRODUCTION

Our Father who art in heaven.

Our Father in heaven.

What does this mean?

Here God encourages us to believe
that he is truly our Father
and we are his children.

We therefore are to pray to him with complete confidence
just as children speak to their loving father.

THE FIRST PETITION

Hallowed be thy name.

Hallowed be your name.

What does this mean?

God's name certainly is holy in itself,
but we ask in this prayer
that we may keep it holy.

When does this happen?

God's name is hallowed
whenever his Word is taught
in its truth and purity
and we as children of God live in harmony with it.
Help us to do this, heavenly Father!

But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to the Word of God
dishonors God's name among us.
Keep us from doing this, heavenly Father!

THE SECOND PETITION

Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come.

What does this mean?

God's kingdom comes indeed
without our praying for it,
but we ask in this prayer that it
may come also to us.

When does this happen?

God's kingdom comes
when our heavenly Father gives us his
Holy Spirit,
so that by his grace we believe his
holy Word
and live a godly life on earth now
and in heaven forever.

THE THIRD PETITION

Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is
surely done without our prayer,

but we ask in this prayer
that it may be done also among us.

When does this happen?

God's will is done when he hinders and
defeats every evil scheme and purpose
of the devil, the world, and our sinful
self,
which would prevent us from keeping his
name holy
and would oppose the coming of his
kingdom.
And his will is done
when he strengthens our faith
and keeps us firm in his Word as long as
we live.
This is his gracious and good will.

THE FOURTH PETITION

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God gives daily bread, even without
our prayer, to all people, though sinful,
but we ask in this prayer
that he will help us to realize this
and to receive our daily bread with
thanks.

What is meant by "daily bread"?

Daily bread includes everything needed
for this life,
such as food and clothing, home and
property,
work and income, a devoted family,
an orderly community, good government,
favorable weather, peace and health,
a good name, and true friends and
neighbors.

THE FIFTH PETITION

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.

What does this mean?

We ask in this prayer
that our Father in heaven would not hold
our sins against us
and because of them refuse to hear our
prayer.

And we pray that he would give us
everything by grace,

for we sin every day
and deserve nothing but punishment.

So we on our part will heartily forgive
and gladly do good to those who sin
against us.

THE SIXTH PETITION

And lead us not into temptation.

Save us from the time of trial.

What does this mean?

God tempts no one to sin,
but we ask in this prayer that God would
watch over us and keep us
so that the devil, the world, and our
sinful self may not deceive us
and draw us into false belief, despair,
and other great and shameful sins.

And we pray that even though we are
so tempted
we may still win the final victory.

THE SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil.

And deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

We ask in this inclusive prayer
that our heavenly Father would save us
from every evil to body and soul,
and at our last hour would mercifully
take us
from the troubles of this world to himself
in heaven.

THE DOXOLOGY

For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

What does "Amen" mean?

Amen means Yes, it shall be so.
We say Amen because we are certain
that such petitions are pleasing to our
Father in heaven and are heard by him.
For he himself has commanded us to
pray in this way
and has promised to hear us.

PART FOUR

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

1

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is not water only,
but it is water used together with God's
Word and by his command.

What Is this Word?

In Matthew 28 our Lord Jesus Christ says:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all
nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

2

What benefits does God give in Baptism?

In Baptism God forgives sin,
delivers from death and the devil,
and gives everlasting salvation to all who
believe what he has promised.

What Is God's promise?

In Mark 16 our Lord Jesus Christ says:

"He who believes and is baptized will be
saved;

but he who does not believe will be
condemned."

3
How can water do such great things?

It is not water that does these things,
but God's Word with the water and our
trust in this Word.
Water by itself is only water,
but with the Word of God
it is a life-giving water
which by grace gives the new birth
through the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul writes in Titus 3:

"He saved us... in virtue of his own mercy,
by the washing of regeneration and
renewal in the Holy Spirit,
which he poured out upon us richly
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
so that we might be justified by his grace
and become heirs in hope of eternal life.
The saying is sure."

4
What does Baptism mean for daily living?

It means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires,
should be drowned through daily repentance;
and that day after day a new self should arise
to live with God in righteousness and purity forever.

St. Paul writes in Romans 6:

"We were buried therefore with him by Baptism into death,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might walk in newness of life."

PART FIVE

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

1
What Is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is the body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ
given with bread and wine,
instituted by Christ himself
for us to eat and drink.

Where do the Scriptures say this?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul say:
Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in
which he was betrayed,
took bread; and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and gave it to his disciples,
saying, "Take, eat, this is my body,
which is given for you;
this do in remembrance of me."

After the same manner also he took the cup
after supper,
and when he had given thanks,
he gave it to them, saying,
"Drink of it, all of you;
this cup is the new testament in my blood,

which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins;
this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

In the night
in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper,
he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink,
saying: This cup is
the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

2

What benefits do we receive from this sacrament?

The benefits of this sacrament are pointed out by the words,

given and shed for you for the remission of sins.

These words assure us that in the sacrament
we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.
For where there is forgiveness of sins,
there is also life and salvation.

3
How can eating and drinking do all this?

It is not eating and drinking that does this,
but the words, **given and shed for you for the remission of sins.**

These words, along with eating and drinking, are the main thing in the sacrament.
And whoever believes these words
has exactly what they say,
forgiveness of sins.

4
When is a person rightly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations serve a good purpose.
However, that person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words,

given and shed for you for the remission of sins.

But anyone who does not believe these words, or doubts them,
is neither prepared nor worthy,
for the words **for you** require simply a believing heart.

The Office of the Keys

What Is the "Office of the Keys"?

It is that authority which Christ gave to his church to forgive the sins of those who repent and to declare to those who do not repent that their sins are not forgiven.

What are the words of Christ?

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
—John 20:23

"Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." —Matthew 18:18

Confession

What is private confession?

Private confession has two parts. First, we make a personal confession of sins to the pastor, and then we receive absolution, which means forgiveness as from God himself. This absolution we should not doubt, but firmly believe that thereby our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should confess that we are guilty of all sins, even those which are not known to us, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But in private confession, as before the pastor, we should confess only those sins which trouble us in heart and mind.

What are such sins?

We can examine our everyday life according to the Ten Commandments—for example, how we act toward father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife, or toward the people with whom we work, and so on. We may ask ourselves whether we have been disobedient or unfaithful, bad-tempered or

dishonest, or whether we have hurt anyone by word or deed.

How might we confess our sins privately?

We may say that we wish to confess our sins and to receive absolution in God's name. We may begin by saying, "I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of many sins." Then we should name the sins that trouble us. We may close the confession with the words, "I repent of all these sins and pray for mercy. I promise to do better with God's help."

What if we are not troubled by any special sins?

We should not torture ourselves with imaginary sins. If we cannot think of any sins to confess (which would hardly ever happen), we need not name any in particular, but may receive absolution because we have already made a general confession to God.

How may we be assured of forgiveness?

The pastor may pronounce the absolution by saying, "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Those who are heavily burdened in conscience the pastor may comfort and encourage with further assurances from God's Word.

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HOW DO LUTHERANS VIEW THE BIBLE?

HERE'S A RIDDLE.

What looks like a book but is really a library?

ANSWER: THE BIBLE

With the sixty-six "books" of the Bible usually bound together as one volume, they may not look like a library. But they are. Those books were written by dozens of authors who lived at various times between 1000 B.C. and about A.D. 130. Some individual books, in fact, came from the hands of many authors and editors.

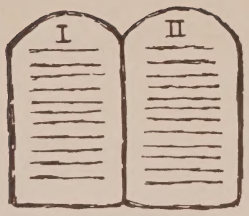
This may sound like another riddle, but the Bible began before it was written. That is, people and events before 1000 B.C. are often referred to. The Bible continued to be developed after A.D. 130, too, because it took almost three more centuries for the collection of books we now call the Bible to become generally accepted as the best selection of basic, authoritative, religious writings for Christians.

DIVINE AND HUMAN

A final riddle-like statement is this: The Bible is both a divine and a human book. Written by human authors, the Bible is also the book of God's good news for the world. Through the Bible's message God speaks to us today and gives us life.

The Bible tells how God established a community of faith, a covenant, with the ancient Hebrews. Through peaceful and stormy times, God related to them as Provider, Savior, Judge, Leader, and Consoler. We also read how almost two thousand years ago God's Son, Jesus Christ, lived among us, creating a new, more inclusive community—the church.

That is all history. But it is not neutral history. This biblical history is a story with possibilities for us, too. For we are told that the same God wants to be friends with us as well. Everything done by God's Son is for us as well as for Peter, James, Paul, and John.



PART 1—OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible is divided into two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Christians share with Jews the thirty-nine Old Testament books. These tell of creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, and other well-known prehistory stories. With the start of a relationship between God and Abraham, including Abraham's descendants, a major thread in the Bible story begins.

Abraham and those who came immediately after him moved from place to place taking care of their flocks. In time they settled in Egypt, where they were enslaved. God's concern for these people, known as Hebrews, resulted in Moses' leading them to freedom. This event, called the Exodus, is the classic Old Testament story of salvation. After years of wandering and after entering a covenant (relationship) with God, the Hebrews settled in Palestine.

Shortly before 1000 B.C. a united kingdom was founded. The second and most famous king was David. After David's son's death, the kingdom divided to form the nations Israel and Judah. Their independence ended in the 720s B.C., and the history of the Hebrew people until the time of Jesus and beyond was one of almost continuous foreign domination. Throughout these changing fortunes, God's spokespersons (generally termed "prophets") announced God's will.

With such a long and varied history, the ancient Hebrews produced a variety of religious writings:

Law, such as the Ten Commandments, God's guidance for life.

History, which recounts events and explains their meanings.

Poetry, such as the hymns (psalms) used in worship.

Prophetic material, which includes messages of woe or salvation.

Wisdom literature, especially short, wise sayings.

PART II—NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament of twenty-seven books tells about Jesus Christ and some of his earliest followers. These books were written in the Greek language, unlike the Hebrew used for most of the Old Testament. They were written over a much shorter period of time, about A.D. 47 to 130, and they cover a much briefer span of history than do the Old Testament books. But it was a crucial time—the time God made good his promise to send a savior for the world.

The New Testament includes the following:

Gospels, which tell the story of Jesus—the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection.

Acts, which highlights the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome, the center of an empire which then ruled the Mediterranean world.

Letters, written by early Christians such as Paul and which give insight into the faith, problems, and activities of the early church.

Revelation (a highly symbolic type of writing—an apocalypse), which has inspired confidence that the future does belong to God.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

There are many different ways to approach the Bible, and Lutherans would not insist on one method only. Some prefer casual reading; others set firm schedules, such as reading a chapter a day. Some helpful suggestions may be these:

- Read a variety of books. Begin with a New Testament Gospel such as Luke. Then read Acts and some letters such as Philippians, the First Letter of John, and Galatians. Old Testament reading could begin with Genesis and Exodus, some of the Psalms, prophets such as Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah, and history such as First and Second Samuel.

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• Use a translation you find understandable. Many translations are available. They include the stately King James Version and more contemporary translations. The Revised Standard Version is good for careful Bible study. Many enjoy Today's English Version (also known as the Good News Bible) for general study and reading.

• Use competent Bible helps. Atlases show place locations. Concordances help find words and passages. *Abingdon Bible Handbook* is an introduction to the Bible and Bible study. *Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* examines the Bible passage by passage. Such aids help one understand the background, and therefore the meaning, of a passage.

• Identify the type of writing you are reading. Because the Bible includes such a wide variety—fiction and nonfiction, poetry and prose, literal and figurative writing—be aware of what you are reading at any given moment. Our phrases such as "My head is splitting" or "He's wrapped around her little finger" would be completely misunderstood if taken literally; so would biblical passages if approached in a way their authors did not intend.

• Reflect on the passage you are reading in light of the good news of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther referred to the Bible as "the cradle that brings Christ to us." Luther found the center of the Bible in Christ. The main theme of the Bible is God's love for all that he has made; it is the good news of Jesus Christ.

• Apply the insights to your life. Ask yourself what the passage you are reading can mean to you, for even though the Bible was written long ago, it is not a back-then-only book. Although many customs, technologies, and concepts change with time, people from various periods of history have much in common. And God remains constant in his love.

• Pray as you use the Bible. The words of the Bible are there for anyone who can read, but the experience of the Bible comes when God's Spirit touches our lives as we hear its message.

• Learn with others. Bible study as part of a Christian community is not only more enjoyable, it helps open us to new understandings. We can be teachers and learners at the same time.

AN INVITATION

To discover more about the Bible, you are invited to the Lutheran congregation nearest you. The Lutheran church has taken the Bible seriously ever since its beginning with Bible teacher Martin Luther. The Bible changed his life. May it also change yours!

FAITH AND ORDER:

Toward Community in One Faith

Commission on Faith and Order
National Council of the Churches of Christ, U.S.A.

Faith and Order:

From the Assistant
General Secretary

Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C.

Christ's prayer for all who believe in Him was "that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe." (John 17:21) With these words, and with other Gospel passages, the Christian community is called to be a sign of that communion which transcends the divisions of human society. In our day, the churches are called to be such a sign to a world divided by the terror of nuclear power and the forces of racism, economic exploitation, sexism and other inequities.

Not since the times of the Apostles, however, have the churches fully manifested this gift of unity given us in Christ. The New Testament describes the fulfillment of Christ's prayer in the days of the early church, when "all who believed were together and had all things in common," (Acts 2:44) but subsequent church history is filled with division and often with conflict.

Against the backdrop of these centuries of division among Christian churches, it is all the more remarkable that in modern times healing has begun to take place among the churches. About 75 years ago, churches took an important step that brought them closer together by initiating a dialogue about the nature of the church, its sacraments and the faith it teaches from the Scriptures.

This dialogue, which many church historians date from the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, and which formed an important part of that conference, evolved into what became known as the Faith and Order movement. The movement earned its name because its theologians, by tradition, have dealt with articles of belief and the ways in which churches order their lives—including questions of authority and how theological points are decided.

The Faith and Order movement developed in the United States with a 1957 conference in Oberlin, Ohio. Conference participants organized a program that was to be lodged with the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCC) as its Commission on Faith and Order. Echoing Christ's prayer for the unity of the church, the commission's formally adopted purpose is "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ and to advance toward that unity in order that the world may believe."

Today the commission is composed of 70 theologians from 30 communions, making it the most inclusive group of theologians in the country working toward Christian unity. In addition to participants from Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican church bodies that belong to the NCCC, there are participants representing Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist and other theological traditions.

Scholars in the commission conduct studies that lay the groundwork for Christian unity, using a variety of approaches and methods. These include careful biblical scholarship, an approach which builds on the fact that the Bible is something all Christians hold in common. Reconciliation can also come through studying together the contemporary contexts of issues that divide Christians and those that potentially unite them. And the commission treats the historical formulations and situations that have kept churches from sharing the same communion, the same Chistian confession of faith and the same witness in a troubled world.

The commission also informs the churches of progress in church union conversations, of theological trends that affect Christian unity and of reconciliation among Christians who are not part of NCCC-related churches. It shares this information through publication of its own studies and through support of other ecumenical publications.

As you read through the following outline of the commission's current work—its various studies, task forces and other resources and services—particular areas may interest you. We cordially invite you to contact us for further information.

A Faith and Order conference brings together theologians from different traditions to discuss the churches' teachings about Christ.

THE VISION OF VISIBLE UNITY

Studies of the Faith and Order movement suggest that a united church does not mean a uniform or "super" church, but rather one in which the special gifts of each branch of the Christian family are celebrated. A united church might take the form of a fellowship of churches participating in one council—a community of Christians united in each place and worldwide, as was the early church. The studies have also identified three general areas in which basic agreement is needed in order to convoke a universal council of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches. These areas are: 1) agreement among the churches to recognize each other's administration of baptism, communion and the ordained ministry; 2) affirmation of a common faith; and 3) common ways of deciding and acting together in the world.

The commission's **Task Force on Baptism, Eucharist & Ministry** (BEM) seeks to contribute to the first mark of a universal council as described above. Toward that goal, the task force works within the U.S. setting on matters related to a landmark document from the World Council of Churches on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. A result of more than 50 years of study and dialogue among church scholars, BEM records convergences in understanding of these areas of church life.

Now churches worldwide are being asked to receive the document and respond formally as to whether it reflects their understanding in these three crucial areas. The Faith and Order Commission of the NCCC, through its BEM Task Force, seeks to assist U.S. churches in this process and to help local and regional ecumenical groups in the study and celebration of the progress toward unity that BEM makes possible.

The commission has sponsored conferences on topics that contribute to the study of BEM, for example, on the role of deacons. It has provided a forum for churches to share with each other the ways in which they are responding to BEM, and it has compiled a list of resources related to this important document.

The commission also assists the churches in exploring the second requirement for a universal council—a common confession of the faith. In their continuing study, **"Toward the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today,"** commission members seek consensus on those elements of faith that are necessary for full unity. In addition to faith expressions as contained in the historic creeds, the commission explores

Black theologians share insights from the experiences of the Black churches with others in the commission.

how faith is lived out in the world, particularly in the face of divisions of race, sex and nationality. Special consultations focusing on Black, Oriental Orthodox and Pentecostal churches have been part of this effort, as well as consultations on the use of creeds, on understandings of the Holy Spirit, and on issues related to credal language, particularly issues of gender and language.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE RENEWAL OF HUMAN COMMUNITY

"The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community" is a new study undertaken by the commission that deals with an old question: What does it mean for Christian believers to be at work in the world? Specifically, the study asks, "How can the ecumenical movement integrate its work on doctrinal issues—which have long been the province of Faith and Order—with efforts to overcome the barriers of race, class, sex and other divisions in our world?

The study explores a two-part premise that begins with the idea that if churches work cooperatively to help heal the wounds of the world, and yet neglect to build a sacramental fellowship among themselves, their joint ministry is in danger of losing its Christian identity. On the other hand, the study points out, if ecumenists were to focus exclusively on doctrinal issues, shutting out the pain of the world, they would be ignoring Christ's example and Christ's call to be with the "least" of God's children. Thus, this study moves back and forth between church and human community, seeking a truly integrated vision for the ecumenical movement.

The current study process draws on previous work in the commission on contemporary issues in society that tend to divide Christians.

BILATERAL CHURCH DIALOGUES

Conversations toward reconciliation and reunion between pairs of churches (called bilateral dialogues), and talks among larger groupings of churches, are among the most fruitful results of the Faith and Order movement. Theologians of

A conference on the current state of interchurch dialogue provides the setting for informal exchange as well.

the commission study the reports of these interchurch conversations to find out how they reinforce one another and what can be learned to help the progress of the church toward full reconciliation.

The commission is currently engaged in a study of the various bilateral dialogues now underway that affect U.S. churches. From its vantage point as a diverse and inclusive body, the commission is in a unique position to survey these developments and share them more broadly among the churches. And in doing so, the commission demonstrates the value of the links among churches, councils of churches and other ecumenical bodies.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is an essential element of the ecumenical movement, sustaining Christians on the long journey toward unity and reconciliation and nurturing them for common service to the human family.

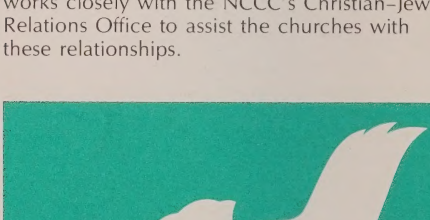
Because the ecumenical movement embraces the diversity to be found in Christianity, it also receives the gift of the rich variety of approaches to spirituality among the various traditions. Mindful of the importance to ecumenism of the life of the spirit in community, the commission has sponsored special projects that celebrate that rich diversity within Christian spirituality.

One major effort in this area, the annual

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, brings the commission into collaboration with the Graymoor Friars, a religious order with a specific commitment to Christian unity. The special week, usually observed from January 18–25, offers an opportunity for Christians across the country to pray together for the unity that Christ desires for the Church. The commission cooperates with the Graymoor Friars as they make a variety of printed resources and worship aids available to help churches observe the week of prayer.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The churches are increasingly involved with other living faiths, not only in overseas ministries, but within our own land. However, the churches are also seriously divided in their approaches to Judaism, Islam and other faiths. The Commission on Faith and Order seeks to bring Christians together to learn about other religions and to discuss the agreements and the differences in their theological bases for interfaith dialogue. The commission sponsors a Christian–Muslim Relations Task Force and works closely with the NCCC's Christian–Jewish Relations Office to assist the churches with these relationships.



For additional free copies of this brochure, or for more information about any of the programs mentioned in it, please contact:
Commission on Faith and Order,
Eighth Floor
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N.Y. 10115

On cover: An ecumenical liturgy. Photo by W. Day

Faith and Order participants from the following communions:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
American Baptist Churches in the USA
American Lutheran Church
Armenian Church of America
Assemblies of God
Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Christian Reformed Church
Church of the Brethren
Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)
Church of God in Christ
Church of the Nazarene
Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
The Episcopal Church
Friends General Conference
General Convention, The Swedenborgian Church
Greek Orthdox Archdiocese of North and South America
International Communion of Charismatic Churches
International Council of Community Churches
Lutheran Church in America
Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod
Mennonite Church
Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
Orthodox Church in America
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Roman Catholic Church
Romanian Orthodox Church in Amerca
Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church
Southern Baptist Convention
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches
Wesleyan Church

Commission on Faith and Order
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Room 872
475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10115-0050
(212-870-2569)

COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER PUBLICATIONS

The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community

Changing Contexts of Our Faith, Letty Russell, ed., Fortress Press

*"The Community of Women and Men in the Church"

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

The Search for Visible Unity: Baptism — Eucharist — Ministry, Brother Jeffrey Gros, FSC, ed., Pilgrim Press

Baptism and Church: A Believers' Church Vision, Merle D. Strege, ed., Sagamore Books

*"BEM — A Summary of Resources and Responses — 1986"

Towards the Common Express of the Apostolic Faith

"Gender and Language in the Creed," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, (Vol. 40, #3, August 1985)

"Toward a Common Expression of Faith: A Black North American Perspective", *Midstream* (Vol. XXIV, #4, *October 1985)*

Spirit of Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit, Theodore Stylianopoulos and Mark Heim, eds., Holy Cross Orthodox Press

Christ in East and West, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan and Paul Fries, eds., Mercer University Press

"Confessing the Apostolic Faith from the Perspective of the Pentecostal Churches", *Pneuma*, (Vol. 9, #1, Spring 1987)

The Bilateral Dialogues

The Quest for Christian Consensus: A Study of Bilateral Theological Dialogue in the Ecumenical Movement, Daniel Martensen, ed., *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Vol. 23, #3, 1986)

Spirituality

Coming Together in the Spirit: A New Approach to Christian Community — with a Study Guide, Frederick H. Borsch, Forward Movement Publications

*"Conciliar Fellowship", a study on the nature and meaning of conciliar fellowship

*"A Critique of the Theology of the Unification Church As Set Forth in 'Divine Principle' "

*"An Experiment in Understanding", a study of ecumenical fellowship conducted on the occasion of the application for membership to the National Council of Churches of Christ by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

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*Available from the Commission Office.

WE ARE PENTECOST PEOPLE

Fifty days after Easter we gather for the third great festival of the church year—the Day of Pentecost.

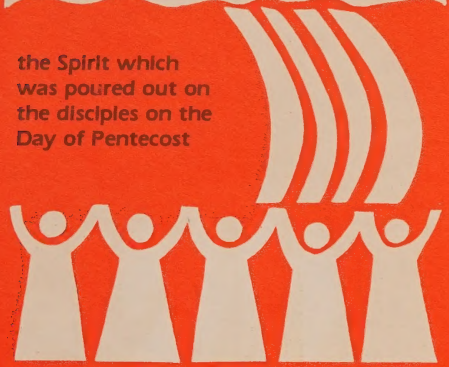
According to St. Luke, the believers were gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Suddenly there came the sound of a mighty wind. What looked like tongues of fire appeared over the heads of the believers, and . . .

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST IS THE FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We celebrate the Holy Spirit . . .

the Spirit which moved over the waters at Creation



the Spirit which was poured out on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost

the Spirit which gives new life in Holy Baptism

We give thanks for the gifts of the Holy Spirit . . .

- the seven-fold gift bestowed upon us in Baptism: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and joy in God's presence
- the gift of guidance, the Spirit's leading of the Church to fulfill its mission—to be Christ's body in the world
- the gift of the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control
- the gift of the Church—the community of faith called, gathered, enlightened, sanctified, and preserved by the Holy Spirit

We pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit . . .

that we may be strengthened for service in God's kingdom.

the Spirit which creates and sustains the Church

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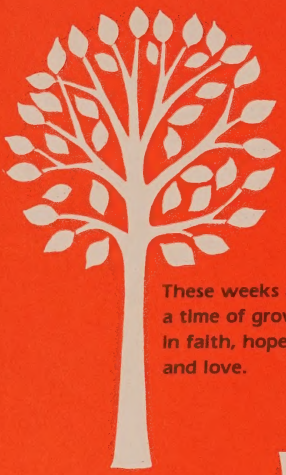
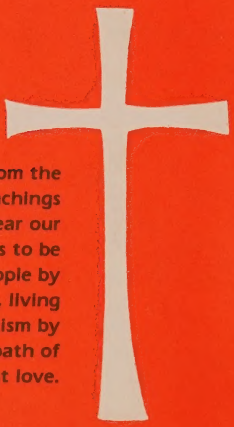
IF WE LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, LET US WALK BY THE SPIRIT.

The liturgical season following the Day of Pentecost, known as the Time of the Church, begins with the Holy Trinity (First Sunday after Pentecost) and ends with Christ the King (which is the last Sunday before Advent).



These weeks are a time of growth in faith, hope, and love.



We learn from the ministry and teachings of Jesus. We hear our Lord calling us to be Pentecost people by following him, living out our Baptism by walking the path of humble servant love.

The descending dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit, which descended like a dove when Jesus was baptized.

Flames symbolize the tongues of fire at the first Christian Pentecost. Red, the color of fire, is the liturgical color for the Day of Pentecost.

ALLELUIA! COME, HOLY SPIRIT, FILL THE HEARTS OF YOUR FAITHFUL PEOPLE; SET THEM ON FIRE WITH YOUR LOVE. ALLELUIA!

Parish Ministry Pamphlets
A Fortress Product. 5-426.

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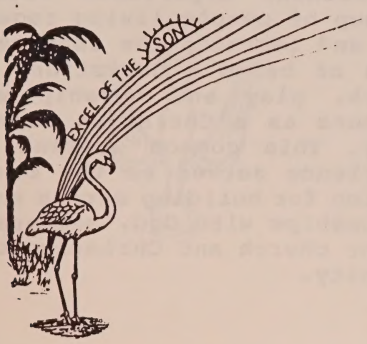

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EXCEL OF THE SON

P.O. BOX 11425
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA 33733-1425
DIRECTOR: (813) 898-9822

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HOW DOES ALL THIS HAPPEN?

You, the participant, share in a weekend experience with a group of people living together and learning the fundamentals of being a Christian. You work, play and worship with others as a Christian community. This common weekend experience serves as the foundation for building strong relationships with God, members of your church and Christian community.

==========

WHAT IS THE WEEKEND LIKE?

The weekend begins on Friday evening at 7:30pm and lasts through Sunday evening around 6:00pm. Since all parts of the weekend fit together and build upon each other, participants need to attend all parts of the exercise. A detachment from all outside concerns and distractions provides an atmosphere of optimum benefit. The exercise consists of a series of talks given by laity and clergy. Following the talks, the discussions and activities help the participant integrate the message and the method of EXCEL.

WHAT DOES THE WEEKEND COST?

The cost is $60. per person, this includes lodging and all meals. Donations from those who have attended previous weekends meet all other costs. To provide the Excel experience to one and all a few scholarships are available. Call (813)823-4167 for information and availability.

==========

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE NEXT EXCEL of the SON WEEKEND

_____

Name

_____

Adress

_____

City/State/Zip Code

_____

Phone

_____

Attending Church at

_____

Have you attended an Excel weekend before?

MAIL TO:

EXCEL OF THE SON
P. O. BOX 11425
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33733-1425

"Yet, I will show you a more excellent way."
I Corinthians 12:31

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WHAT IS EXCEL?

The Excel experience is a weekend Christian educational program of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. This weekend is primarily run by the laity of UFMCC. It illustrates to the participants what basics or fundamentals are needed to provide a foundation for the Christian in daily life. The overall purpose of the weekend is to renew Christian life among people in the churches through this experience. Excel provides a vehicle to build up, strengthen and motivate individuals to help the church remain alive as a living body of Christ.

==========

WHY IS IT CALLED AN "EXERCISE"?

St. Ignatius of Loyola first popularized the term centuries ago when he developed his famous Spiritual Exercises. Our Exercise in Christian Community Living can trace its influence to those Exercises. Excel is a unique weekend spiritual experience of Christian renewal. The Exercise brings new life and new meaning to one's personal spiritual life and the whole church community.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THE EXERCISE?

The Exercise in Christian Community living finds its roots in the Cursillo movement which began in Spain during the 1950's. After the experience of Cursillo, several writers wrote down the message and method of the movement in several books. These constitute the basic literature of the movement. UFMCC learned of the movement through Rev. Richard Mickley UFMCC's Excel exercise occurred in Los Angeles in January, 1976. The Excel movement has grown steadily throughout the Fellowship; there are now eleven different teams presenting the Excel weekends all over the world. For further information on the other Excel teams, write Excel International at 125 Camino Alto, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Excel of the Son was organized in Central Florida in 1986. The first weekend exercise was held in May, 1987.

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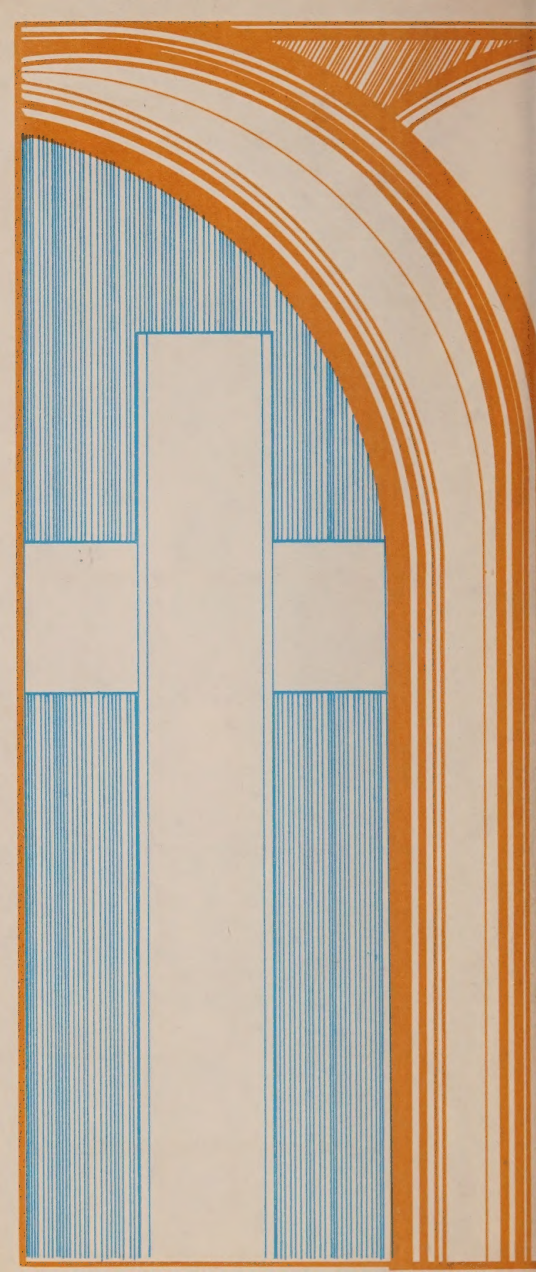
WHO CONDUCTS THE WEEKEND?

The weekend is conducted by a team of women and men, mostly laypeople, who prepare through prayer and study, for at least six months, to conduct the weekend in accordance with the procedures of the exercise.

A PLACE OF REFUGE



The word *sanctuary* has several meanings: it is used as the name of a holy, consecrated place such as the Temple in Jerusalem or that part of the church building where the altar stands and, at times, it is also used to describe a place of refuge or safety such as, for example, a wildlife preserve, or a quiet and solitary place to which one can turn in time of need.

Marge Found It

At the time of the untimely death of her husband, Marge found just that kind of refuge within the fellowship of the church. As the initial shock and numbness began to fade she had a difficult time trying to cope with and adjust to all the changes in her life. How could she possibly fill the void and loneliness? Where could she turn for comfort and support? To whom could she speak about her fears and anxieties?

Marge was fortunate in having faith in the saving power of the Lord and close relation to the congregation she and her husband had joined. The pastor and many of the congregation's members were personal friends. So it was natural that Marge found the help she needed within the community of faith. Her trust in a living God who had conquered death was strengthened by the witness in words and deeds of those she knew and loved.

Bill Wanted It

Bill did not have that kind of support as he tried to sort out the pieces of a broken marriage. He had never had more than a nominal relationship with the church. Indeed, his indifference to those things which Sandra considered most important had been a bone of contention in their relationship. Now that separation, or divorce, seemed inevitable, he began to have second thoughts. Could he talk this whole mess over with the pastor? Would he be laughed at, ridiculed, judged, made to feel more guilty than he already felt? What did the pastor know about the doubts that kept him awake night after night? Would he even listen to someone who had been so negligent about church attendance and so uncertain about the things he had learned in confirmation classes? Bill needed help—wanted help—but he was hesitant to take the first step.

Jane Was Given It

Jane was in her late eighties, and she often felt useless and lonely. She had outlived most of her friends. All of her children were dead with the exception of one son who had retired and lived a thousand miles away. She had trouble getting around her one-room apartment and she was almost deaf. But Jane was not forgotten. Each week that nice Mrs. Jones brought her the tape of last Sunday's worship service. At least once a week there were visitors from the women's circle of which she had once been an active member. The pastor brought her Holy Communion at regular intervals. And there were many cards at Christmas and Easter and on her birthday; some from people she did not even know, but all members of that family of faith she called her church. The loneliness remained, but it was eased by loving concern and thoughtful care.

God Is Our Refuge

The church is called to live up to its Lord's words of comfort: "Come unto me, all you who are weary and I will give you rest." Through its pastors and people it holds out the reassurance that God stands beside all those who are troubled in body, mind, or spirit. It proclaims the good news that God in Jesus, the Christ, has acted to redeem and restore *all* who turn to him in trust and commitment.

That "all" must be taken seriously. There are no exceptions, no predetermined qualifications, no conditions that must be met. God will forgive and accept all who sincerely accept him. As one hymn writer put it: "Just as I am, Thou wilt receive; Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve." Our most profound hope lies in the promise that God will reconcile all that separates us from him and from one another. What *we* do or can do means nothing. It is because of the wondrous works of what God has already done that the church finds the strength to fling its doors open to those who need its ministering help.

The Church Cares

This does not mean that the church has all the answers to all the problems in the world. It may not even have the solution you need in your particular situation. But it does have genuine concern for people. And it extends, on behalf of its Lord, forgiveness and hope through Word and Sacraments.

When you, or someone you know needs help, call on the church: in a moment of crisis; in a long-standing deterioration of physical or mental faculties; in the frustration of broken promises and ruptured relationships. Call on the church for help in those dark hours when God himself seems far away and out of touch. Whenever or for whatever reason, whether it seems insignificant or not, give the church a chance to lend a helping hand, to share God's healing Word. The church is people who know the love of Christ and who care for you.

EVANGELICAL OUTREACH
Division for Parish Services
2900 Queen Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19129

E0-156

Printed in U.S.A.

Interagency attendance Oct. 12, 1983

1. Clara Ross I & R 436-9777
2. Frank Biasco UWF 477-1912
3. Phil Burger WuWF 474-2327
4. Tony Cooper Waterfront Mission 438-4027
5. Meriette Cline Streeter The Friends Program, Inc. 433-3790
6. Leon Greenlove Law Enforcement Ministries 433-3890
7. Larry Williams Florida House Program, Lakeview Center 432-1223 Ex.,462
8. Bob Taylor Epilepsy Society 433-1395
9. Marianne Grasso Esc. Co. Day Care 438-6094
10. Theresa Ervin Center for Independ Living 438-3540
11. Joe Worshan Chayah Ministries 438-5195
12. Eddie Jakes St. Joseph's Community Center 434-2394
13. Sharon Burns " " " "
14. True Feeney Child Protection Team 476-6204
15. Elin Grant Esc. Co Health Dept. 438-8571
16. Connie Macdonald NW Fla. Legal Services 423-2336
17. Bruce Anderson Manna Food Bank 423-2053
18. Maggie Longmire Area Housing Comm. 434-2156
19. Beth Craig Council on Aging 423-1475
20. Frank Johnson Manna Food Bank 432-2053
21. Irvin Williams Lakeview Center Drug Service 432-1222
22. Vivian Jones Human Relations 434-2431
23. Barbara Hoard Human Relations 434-2431
24. Linda Statham United Cerebral Palsey of NW Fl. 432-1596
25. La Nelle Campbell United Way 434-3157
26. Willie Mare Jackson Social Services, Escambia 433-1618
27. Sherry Schembera HRS 432-1251

Interagency attendance Nov. 9, 1983

1. Frank Biasco UWF 477-1912
2. David Stokes VA Social Work Services 432-2788
3. Marian Morin George Stone 944-1424
4. Jewel Williams V.P. 587-5301
5. Tony Cooper Waterfront Rescue Mission 438-4027
6. Virginia W. Barker CAP 438-4021
7. Sally Mestayer Special Parents/ Santa Rosa ARC 432-4513
8. La Nelle Campbell United Way 434-3157
9. Sheryl Eboylu Child Protection Team--Prevention Project 863-3109
10. Clara Ross Information and Referral 436-9777
11. Karen Smith Pensacola News 433-0041
12. Diane Earl Women for Responsible Legislation 434-5932
13. Carrie Henderson (for Mr. Shoemo) HRS 434-3431
14. Vivian Jones Human Relations 434-2431
15. Niki Wales JASP Juveneille Justice Center 434-3431
16. Paual Y. Fails Area Housing Commission 434-2156

Interagency Council of Escambia County

November 9, 1983
Meeting Minutes

Dr. Frank Biasco, president, opened the meeting and called upon Tony Cooper of Waterfront Mission to give the invocation.

Copies of last month's minutes were distributed and stand as written. Marian Morin offered to type minutes for Clara Ross, secretary.

Ir was announced that according to the by-laws, the agency needs to have a slate prepared for the December meeting when new officers will be elected, and also that funds are to be audited. The offering (Nov.9) was $10.00.

Sheryl Eboylu presented a slide program on child abuse. Highlights of her information: 65% of persons in institutions have been abused children. Florida is the only state that has a network for child protection. Florida law required that suspected child abuse must be reported; 24 hours are allowed for checking on the report and the person making the report may be anonymous. The Child Abuse Prevention Team works with HRS case workers in checking reports and in promoting coordination among agencies. The organization is developing a handbook for referral of cases to be distributed among agencies.

New persons:

Diane Earl: Women for Responsible Legislation, invited the group to attend their next meeting, Nov. 16, 11 a.m. at Captain Jim's.
Carrie Henderson, HRS
Niki Wales, JASP, Juveneille Justice Center
Vivian Jones, Human Relations
Sally Mestayer, Special Parents, (Santa Rosa Retarded Children), hot line: 432-4513

Marian Morin announced that George Stone will have new classes at night in word processing and bank teller training beginning in January; contact evening counselor at 944-1424.

St. Joseph's Center offers blood pressure check every Friday.

David Stokes asked the group to consider becoming involved in the community by taking a stand on certain issues. Decided upon were 10 transportation 20 emergency funds 30 lodging for families and 40 medical emergencies

Dr. Biasco stated that he hopes to get some fo the county commissioners to attend agency meeting.

It was agreed that those who care to will being a sack lunch to the next meeting for "Christmas lunch" after the meeting. Marian Morin agreed to bring refreshment "goodies."

Meeting adjourned.

September 11, 1983

TO: Interim Board of Directors

From: Steve Urie, Student Clergy
Interim Co-Worship Coordinator

Subject: Interfaith Council Dues

I believe that one of the most important accomplishments made by B. Toller, Past Worship Coordinator, was that of getting Metropolitan Community Church on the Interfaith Council. This outreach of ecumenical cooperation is with the Worship Leaders of almost every denomination in the area and we have made great strides in developing a rapport with this group.

Due to the importance of this work, I'm requesting that the Board approve and write a check in the amount of $10.00 to cover membership dues for both Rev. Marge Ragona and myself. This is to be paid at the September meeting which falls this next week.

In God's Love and in His continued Service,

Steve Thomas

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TO: Interim Board of Directors

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Due to the importance of this work, I'm requesting that the Board approve and write a check in the amount of $10.00 to cover membership dues for both Rev. Mary Hagoun and myself. This is to be paid at the September meeting which falls this next week.

In God's Love and in His continued Service,

Steve Urbano

Minutes of Interagency Council for Wednesday, December 14, 1983.

Dr. Frank Biasco called the Interagency Council Meeting to order. Tony Cooper gave the invocation. The minutes were approved. The Treasurer reported the amount of .06 on hand. Eleven dollars and fifty cents was collected in the bowl for the next mailing.
The nominating committee chaired by Virginia Barker reported David Stokes from VA and Paula Fails from Housing were nomintted for Board Membership. They replace Virginia Barker and Eddie Jones. The nominations were accepted unanimously. Clara Ross was nominated and accepted as Secretary. Dr. Biasco announced the guest of honor for the January 11 meeting will be Willie Junior, a new County Commissioner of Escambia County. Phil Waltrip, also a new County Commissioner, was the guest for December. He spoke of his interest and concern in the Human Services and gave his phone 436-5793 to be called when he could be of assistance. Members then introdueed themselves reporting new information in the process.

Elizabeth Lawson is a new member form Recovery Center(previously Twelve Oakes). Peggy Walker announced Children Home Society's recent involvement in intensive crisis counseling with children being removed from the hom.
Lakeview Center announced a Workshop on Balancing Work and Family on Saturday January 21. Representative Ginger Bass will speak.
Kay McCleod, a Social Worker with Sacred Heart Hospital and Vice President of the Ronald McDonald House Board announced the ground breaking for the new House within the next three weeks.
Marion Morin announced starting new classes at George Stone in Data Processing.
Leroy Greenlaw reported the Jail Ministry has recieved 513 Christmas Stockings from the United Methodist Church Women.
There was a question about Havinga Justice for Children organization in the community. It was suggested that they contact Paul Jasper at the Pensacola News-Journal.
David Stokes expressed concern for unmet needs in the community in Emergency Funding, lodging for families, medical Assistance and transportation. Members offered information about several programs that sometimes meet some of these needs.
Leroy Greenlaw will provide next months refeeshments.
The next meeting will be held January 11 at 10am at the Volunteer Pensacola Conference Room at 1301 W. Government St.
The meeting was adjourned at 11am.

The following attended:

Frank Biasco	UWF
Marion Morin	George Stone
Linda Taggart	SHF
Virginia Barker	CAP
David Stokes	VA
LaNelle Campbell	U-Way
Clara Ross	I&R
Elizabeth Lamson	Twelve Oaks
Judy Coe	I&R
Phil Waltrip	Co. Comm.
Wayne Peacock	Esc. County
Tony Cooper	Waterfront Mission,P.O. Box 854, 32594
Theresa Erwin	Center for Independent Living
Jeanne Halpern	Rape Crisis Center
Mary Rebber	E.C.S.D.
Peggy Waller	Children's Home Society
Bob Taylor	Epilepsy Society
Anthony (Tony) Shoemo	HRS-Juvenile Justice Center
Leroy Greenlaw	Law Enforcement Ministries

If you do not wish to receive this meeting notice, please contact Clara Ross at 436-9777.

VOLUNTEER PENSACOLA
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